

Guidelines for the Inadvertent Discovery of Human Skeletal Remains on Non-Federal and Non-Tribal Lands in the State of Washington

1. All persons who know of the existence and location of human skeletal remains must, by law, **notify the county coroner and local law enforcement**. This must be done in the most expeditious manner possible. (RCW 27.44; 68.50; 68.60)
2. Any person engaging in ground disturbing activity that encounters skeletal human remains must **cease all activity which may cause further disturbance to the remains, make a reasonable effort to protect the area from further disturbance, and report the presence and location of those remains to the county coroner and local law enforcement**. (RCW 27.44; 68.50; 68.60)
3. The county coroner will assume jurisdiction over the human skeletal remains and make a determination of whether those remains are forensic or non-forensic. (RCW 27.44; 68.50; 68.60)
4. If the county coroner determines the remains are non-forensic, then the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation will take jurisdiction over those remains from non-Federal and Non-Tribal land and report them to any appropriate cemeteries and affected tribes. (RCW 27.44; 68.50; 68.60)
5. The State Physical Anthropologist will make a determination of whether the remains are Indian or Non-Indian and report that finding to the any appropriate cemeteries and affected tribes. (RCW 27.44, 68.50; 68.60)
6. The DAHP will handle all consultation with the affected parties as to the future preservation, excavation, and disposition of the remains.

Questions:

Dr. Guy Tasa

State Physical Anthropologist, DAHP
1063 South Capitol Way, Suite 106
PO Box 48343
Olympia, Washington 98504 - 48343
Email: guy.tasa@dahp.wa.gov
Phone: (360) 586-3534
Cell: (360) 790-1633